GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2670
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2016
Operation Khanij Khoj
Chavan Shri Ashok Shankarrao;Gaikwad Dr. Sunil Baliram;Gupta Shri Sudheer;Jayavardhan Dr. Jayakumar;Kirtikar Shri Gajanan Chandrakant;Mahato Shri Bidyut Baran;S.R. Shri Vijay Kumar;Singh Shri Kunwar Haribansh

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has launched "Operation Khanij Khoj" of Geological Survey of India (GSI) and if so, the details thereof along with the aims and objectives of the operation;
(b) whether the Government has received GSI report of 100 mineral block for regional exploration and if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be put on e-auction for exploration by private companies;
(c) whether the Government has decided to digitalize its over 6600 exploration reports for putting it in the public domain and if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be completed; and
(d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to boost the private investment in mineral exploration sector?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINES AND STEEL(SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI)

(a): Yes, Madam. Geological Survey of India [GSI] will be taking up two multi-disciplinary pilot collaboration projects under 'Project Uncover' (Operation Khanij Khoj) in its Field Season 2016-17. Under this project GSI will cover the northern part of Aravallis-Bundelkhand Craton, and western to eastern part of Dharwar Craton. The pilot studies are planned to be carried out in three years. The aims and objectives of these projects are to search for concealed and deep seated mineral deposits below the thick sediment cover.
(b): GSI has identified 108 mineral blocks for regional exploration. These are located in 23 States namely, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Sikkim.

The Ministry of Mines is in the process of finalizing a National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP) to outline the action plan for ensuring comprehensive exploration of the country's mineral resources (non-fuel and non-coal). The policy, inter-alia, proposes participation of private entrepreneurs in mineral exploration through a transparent method. After finalization of NMEP, these blocks may be taken up for auction.

(c): GSI is carrying out digitization of all of its exploration reports which is being planned to be completed by June 2016. Thereafter, these reports will be uploaded on GSI Portal.

(d): The Government, in the proposed NMEP, envisages a number of measures to boost private investment in mineral exploration sector. Some of these measures include placing of high quality baseline geoscientific data in public domain, incentivizing the exploration agencies, etc.